

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**

19202

FILE: B-202506

DATE: August 20, 1981

MATTER OF: Colleen A. Small -
Travel to seek residence quarters

DIGEST: Employee may not be paid a per diem allowance on a second house-hunting trip, since only one round trip is authorized under 5 U.S.C. 5724a(a)(2). The 6 days including travel-time authorized under paragraph 2-4.1a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7), must run consecutively.

Mr. H. O. Miller, Accounting and Finance Officer, Defense Logistics Agency, requests an advance decision regarding Mrs. Colleen A. Small's claim of a per diem allowance during a second house-hunting trip incident to transfer of station.

Payment of the claim is denied since expenses of only one round trip for a maximum number of 6 consecutive calendar days is authorized.

Mrs. Colleen A. Small was transferred from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Alexandria, Virginia. In connection with this transfer she was authorized round-trip travel not to exceed 6 days to the new station to seek a permanent residence. Accompanied by her husband, she made two round-trip house-hunting trips, consisting of a trip from September 15 through September 17, 1980, and another from September 22 through September 24, 1980. Mrs. Small was paid mileage and per diem for the first round trip and now seeks payment of per diem for the period September 22 through September 24, 1980, which was denied on a previous voucher because the claim involved two round trips which were not completed within 6 consecutive days. She indicates that she divided her house hunting into two trips because the nature of her duties required a return to her old duty station to perform assignments which could not be deferred until completion of house hunting in a single round trip. She further contends that her husband could not continue the house hunting alone because he was disabled. In addition, she states that her travel orders authorize 6 calendar days for the house-hunting trip and do not state that the days must be consecutive.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred in seeking residence quarters at a new official station is limited to one round trip in connection with each change of station under 5 U.S.C. 5724a(a)(2) (1976) and paragraph 2-4.1a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7). The maximum number of days for the one trip is 6, including traveltime,

[Claim for Per Diem Allowance During Second House-Hunting Trip]

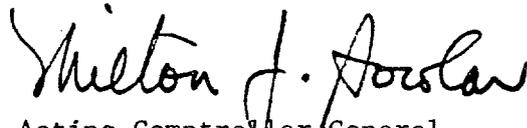
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under paragraph 2-4.2 of the Federal Travel Regulations. Further, paragraph C4107-5 of Volume 2, Joint Travel Regulations, implementing regulations of the Department of Defense also limits the period of the round-trip travel at Government expense to 6 calendar days including traveltime.

We held in 47 Comp. Gen. 189 (1967) that per diem incident to house hunting may not be paid for time spent at the new official station after completion of the single authorized trip. We further held in B-178441, June 18, 1973, that since only one round trip is authorized under the law, the allowable 6 calendar days necessarily must run consecutively. See also Jerry L. Long, B-196153, February 12, 1980.

The record before us indicates that the per diem claimed is for a period after completion of the single authorized trip. Accordingly, Mrs. Small's claim for additional payment is denied.


Acting Comptroller General
of the United States